

THE LOVE LETTERS OF A POPULAR ACTOR.

A Few of the Many Missives that Are Sent to Chauncey Olcott, the Matinee Idol.

A LONG with the privilege of being a matinee idol there is attached a fearful penalty. Rich men and famous men have their shares of worry in dealing with beggars and cranks, but their troubles are nothing compared with those of the popular actor, whose love is more in demand than the rich man's gold.

The young and handsome actor who becomes popular with women must expect to read on the average about twenty love letters a day. This has been the experience of actors who were matinee idols long ago, and it is the experience that Chauncey Olcott, the latest hero, is encountering just now. They come for the most part, of course, from silly young girls, some of them old enough, though, to know better, who, in their innocent way, place the actor far above the average man.

Occasionally, however, women, in middle age, are carried away with the gilt and tinsel that surrounds a stage hero, and don't hesitate to tell him as much.

But the chief source of annoyance comes from the poetic, sentimental kind.

"I feel sorry for these unknown admirers of mine," said Mr. Olcott. "I really feel sorry for them. But they forget me in a day. Their love is not lasting. If these girls knew that my mother is my only sweetheart, and that it is she who reads the letters instead of myself, they would spare themselves as well as me the trouble.

"I have never seriously regarded but one letter from a matinee girl. It is a delightful little thing, and, as you see, is from a child. Here it is:"

"Dear Mr. Olcott: I am a little girl only seven years old, and I cannot write very well, but I love you very, very much. I cannot tell you how much. If I could it would not be much, for mamma says what we feel the most we can express the least. But, all the same, I love you very much.

"The reason why I love you so dearly is because I saw you play. My mamma took me to the matinee. She said I might write to you if I liked. I love my mamma better than any one in the world, and that is why I love you next. Because in the play you love your mother—that made me love you.

"Mamma says it is not your real mother, only a make-believe mother, but I am sure you love her all the same, just as I love my dear mamma. If I were your little girl you would love me, wouldn't you? for I love you so much. And if I was your little girl, would you sing to me every day? Mamma says you only sing on the stage, but I do not believe it. I know if I were your little girl you would sing to me about the little fly every time I asked you. G—."

"This one only came to-day. It has a ring of sincerity about it that is lacking in a majority of the others. See what it offers:"

"Dear Mr. Olcott: Every day of your life I presume you receive letters from silly, sentimental girls who tell you they are madly in love with you and long to make your acquaintance. I am no silly, stupid caramel girl, but a woman of the world, to whom love had become a dream of the past until fate led me to see you in 'Sweet Inniscarra.' Since then my soul has known no peace. Your face is ever before me, your voice is ever ringing in my ears. I long to speak with you, to clasp your hand. I do not ask you to care for me, only let me love you. Will you come to see me? I live magnificently. I have almost untold wealth. Marry me and I will make you one of the richest men in America.

"Tell me that you will come and I will send my carriage for you to-morrow."

"This woman," continued the actor, "is not a woman of the world or she wouldn't be guilty of this. She would know better. She was just carried away, like the younger ones, with the glamour that surrounds a stage hero. She will regret to-morrow that she sent the letter, and wonder how she could have been so silly.

"But here are others that are more in the usual strain:"

"Mr. Olcott: I love you. How much you will never know. I never expect to meet you, and you will never know my name. Still, I want you to know that there is one little woman in the world who has given you her whole heart."

"I write this letter, dear Mr. Olcott, simply because I cannot help it. Something in my heart tells me that you will not be angry with me for writing it. You surely would not if you knew my love for you. I have only seen you on the stage, but that was enough. I loved you from the first. Your eyes seemed to bur into my soul. Try hard as I may, I cannot forget you. Oh, I am so unhappy. One word from you would make my life a paradise.

"I never saw you until yesterday. When you came on the stage my heart gave a great bound—and I knew that I had found my affinity. I love you, I feel that I could worship you. My friends say I am good looking. You may not think so. But will you see me? Will you let me talk to you? It seems impossible that one could love so hard without being loved in return. Please let me see you, please, please do."

"For the first time in my life—and I have lived 18 long years—I know that I am in love. You will call me a foolish, silly girl, I know, but I can't help it. I love you. I saw you only yesterday. I have been in a whirl ever since. Waking or sleeping, your face is always before me. Your sweet voice is always making melody in my ears. Ah, if you could but know the depth of my love! oh, if you could but know!"

"Dear Mr. Olcott: For weeks I have worshipped you from a distance. I have



Chauncey Olcott, the Matinee Girls' Idol, Reading Love Letters from Worshipping Admirers.

loved you from the moment I first saw your face. Life is no longer worth living without your acquaintance. Will you meet me after the matinee on the corner of Sixth avenue and Fifteenth street, just in front of the church steps? You will know me by the bunch of red carnations in my left hand. Fondly."

"Oh, Mr. Olcott: Six of us girls have saved up our money and bought a box for the matinee to-day. We have all bought flowers, which we are going to throw to you. We are all in love with you, but I am just wild about you. I shall throw you a bunch of roses with a little note in it, which I shall kiss a hundred times for you."

"Mr. Olcott, when you are on the stage alone at to-day's matinee look in the box at the right. I shall wear a bunch of violets on my breast. When you look at me I will throw you the violets, to which will be fastened a note telling you where you can meet me."

"Dear Mr. Olcott: Please do not think me silly when I tell you that I adore you. I wish you would write me a letter, telling me where I might meet you. Do you ride the wheel? If so, meet me to-morrow at 3 p. m. on the Boulevard and Sixty-ninth street. I shall wear a blue suit and red sailor hat. An American beauty rose will be pinned to my corsage. Lovingly."

"Dear Mr. Olcott: 'I have saved all my spending money for the last six weeks to buy matinee tickets to see you in 'Sweet Inniscarra.' Since I first saw you I have been haunted by your beautiful face and your sweet voice still rings in my ears. How I wish I dare speak to you! I have waited outside the theatre after every matinee, determined to speak to you, but when I saw you I had not the courage. To-day I shall be there. Will you please speak to me or just look into my eyes and I shall be happy. When you pass me I shall throw a white rose at your feet that you may know her who worships you."

"Love letters form only a part of the many missives I receive daily," continued the actor. "There are letters from religious cranks, asking me if in my prosperity I have forgotten my God, if I am unmindful of the fact that I owe one-half my income to the Church. Letters from men and women who are interested in enterprises which will make my everlasting fortune, if I will only invest a small amount in them. Letters from musical enthusiasts, who see glory and fortune in their songs if I will only consent to sing them. Letters from grumblers and fault-finders, who could make much more of my part than I am making, and hundreds of the most ridiculous begging letters you ever read. Here is an odd one, also from a woman:"

"Mr. Chauncey Olcott—Sir: I am a poor, hard-working woman (widow). Have suffered untold agony. Was two years ill. Had in those two years six operations by one of our most skilled surgeons. I am quite well now, but am getting very fleshy, which is bad for my health, at least so the doctors say. Will you kindly give me \$25 to get a bicycle. I can get one for that amount. It will be good enough for me to ride around on for exercise. It will be impossible for me to buy one, as all I can do is to pay board and clothe myself. Trust you will not think I have a terrible nerve or that I am forward, which I am not, but that you will kindly help me get the wheel. I would not have written this to you, only I was told by a lady that visits in the house your mother lives in Bufak, that you were most kind and would get it for me, if you knew my case.

"I will go up to Fourteenth street Sunday, at the foot of the elevated steps, at 12 m. If you cannot get there my address is—

"P. S. Kindly answer and I will pray to St. Anthony for your welfare and happiness."

Love's Rose,

The weary wind of life drives chill;
The blast more bitter blows;
Yet in my heart there grows
A sweet "wild rose."

Fair, fragrant flower no blast can kill,
However loud and long;
Forgive my lowly song,
That doth thee wrong.